

About the conference

The eleventh annual conference explores Ukraine as a historically contested space shaped by competing political projects, narratives, and loyalties. It brings into dialogue different approaches to Ukrainian statehood, the role of religion, and the interaction of imperial and national formations, paying particular attention to the spatial imaginaries and mental maps through which Ukraine has been constructed, claimed, and reinterpreted over time. These processes are situated within a broader Central and Eastern European context, while keeping a clear focus on the specific dynamics of the Ukrainian case.

Across two days the papers trace how competing visions of space, identity, and authority have interacted, overlapped, or collided – from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historiography and imperial colonization debates to Soviet-era gender, memory, and visual culture, and on to the media narratives and refugee testimonies of the current war. Together they examine how these dynamics continue to shape both historical interpretation and contemporary perspectives on Ukraine.

Organizational committee

Prof. Dr. Miloš Řezník (Chemnitz University of Technology)

Prof. Dr. Gelinada Grinchenko (University of Munich / Oles Honchar Dnipro National University)

Prof. Dr. Ricarda Vulpius (University of Münster)

Prof. Dr. Yaroslav Hrytsak (Ukrainian Catholic University)

Conference venue

Hotel an der Oper · Strasse der Nationen 56 · 09111 Chemnitz · Germany

Contact

duhk@lrz.uni-muenchen.de · +49 89 2180-3056 · www.duhk.org

Cooperation Partners

The German-Ukrainian Historical Commission is supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

www.daad.de

Eleventh Annual Conference of the
German-Ukrainian Historical Commission

Competing Narratives in the Entangled Histories of Ukraine

Chemnitz, September 28–29, 2026

Deutsch-Ukrainische
Українсько-німецька
Historische Kommission
історична комісія

Monday, September 28, 2026

Narrating Ukraine: Historiography, Ideology, and Memory from Empire to the Present

14:00 Welcome address by the conference organizers

14:15 Keynote lecture – Decolonizing Ukraine’s Religious Past after Postmodernism: Toward a Metamodern Historical Consciousness
Pavlo Eremeev (V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University)
Candidate of Historical Sciences and Associate Professor at the School of History, V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. A historian of religion and of Eastern Europe in the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries, with a focus on intellectual history and historiography. Keynote address, followed by discussion. (Title to be announced.)

15:15 Break

15:45 Panel 1 – Emplotting Ukraine: Historiographical Debates on Empire and Colonization
Yurii Zazuliak (LMU Munich / University of Leipzig)
Between Universal History and New Imperial Order: Forerunners of the Entangled Histories of Ukraine in 18th-Century German History Writing
Explores late-eighteenth-century German-language historiography – especially Johann Christian von Engel – as an early forerunner of entangled, trans-imperial approaches to the Ukrainian past.
Stefan Rohdewald (University of Leipzig)
Multiple Ukrainian Colonialities: Polish, Russian and Ukrainian Historiographical Debates during the 19th Century on Late Medieval and Early Modern Colonization
Traces how Polish national, Russian imperial, and Ukrainian historiographies debated the “colonization” of Ukrainian lands, and how Hrushevsky appropriated and transformed these (de)colonial concepts.

17:15 Break

17:30 Panel 2 – Whose Ukraine? Civilizational Ideology and Memorial Self-Narration
Natalia Kovalchuk (Ukrainian Catholic University)
Reinventing the “Slavic Idea”: Russian Conservative Intellectuals and the Civilizational Contest over Ukraine
Shows how post-Soviet Russian conservative intellectuals – Narochnitskaia and Platonov – reinvented the nineteenth-century “Slavic idea” to frame Ukraine as an inseparable part of a Russian-Orthodox civilization.
Mykola Borovyk & Alona Tron (Sachsenburg Concentration Camp Memorial Site)
“Unusable Past”: Competing Memorial Narratives and Their Functions in the Self-Presentations of Ukrainian Refugees
Uses oral-history testimonies of Ukrainian refugees after 2022 to examine how competing memorial narratives functioned – and often failed – as frameworks for making sense of the full-scale invasion.

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

09:00 Panel 3 – Framing the Periphery: Colonial and Paternalist Visions of Rural Communities
Sean David Patterson (University of Alberta, Edmonton)
Anarchists and Anabaptists: The Role of the Colonial in Structuring the Makhnovist–Mennonite Conflict of the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1921
Tests the utility of postcolonial concepts through the case of Mennonite colonists in southern Ukraine and their violent conflict with Nestor Makhno’s insurgency, tracing the region’s colonial roots back to Catherine II’s settlement policy.
Martin Rohde (University of Vienna)
From Paternalism to Modernism: Visions of the Carpathian Village in Ukraine’s Age of Extremes
A visual-history study of villages in the Ukrainian Eastern Carpathians, comparing official top-down state photography with vernacular images to recover local perspectives on modernization and Soviet rule.

10:30 Break

11.00 Panel 4 – Competing Narratives: Performing Political Subjects from Socialism to the Present
Tetyana Fedorchuk (University of Bern)
Performing the Socialist Woman: Competing Narratives of Women’s Political Participation in the Ukrainian SSR, 1950s–1960s
Examines how competing narratives of women’s political participation were constructed and contested in Soviet Ukraine, at the intersection of domestic mobilisation, regional integration, and Cold War internationalism.
Oleksandra Iaroshenko (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy)
From “Distant Others” to “People Like Us”? Transformations in the Representation of Civilian Suffering in International Media Discourses on Ukraine, 2014–2026
Analyses how international media representations of Ukrainian civilians shifted from “distant suffering” to moral proximity, drawing on a corpus of 6,000 news articles from Ukrainian, British, and American outlets.

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Final discussion

14.30 Visit to the Landeszentrale

Afterwards Excursion